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Senator Fights for Hospital Bed Transfers

Cassis Works to see Transfers Through

LANSING— As the June 15 deadline passed for a Certificate of Need Commission vote on the transfer of unused hospital beds to other facilities within a health system, State Sen. Nancy Cassis realized her efforts had borne fruit.

“We are thrilled with the work of Nancy Cassis. She’s been a true champion on this issue,” said Rose Glenn, spokesperson for Henry Ford Health System. “Transferring hospital beds creates health care access for growing communities like West Bloomfield. We appreciate Sen. Cassis’ involvement on making sure good public policy gets executed.”

Sen. Cassis, last year as a state representative, helped to amend the Michigan Public Health Code to allow health systems a one-time transfer of up to 35 percent of unoccupied hospital beds to other hospitals within that system without a certificate of need. A certificate of need is required before any new inpatient beds could be obtained, with the exception of this transfer.

“Hospital bed transfers are necessary, especially in southeast Michigan. That’s where the people are,” said Cassis. “These transfers help Detroit hospitals that are drowning in red ink, and also make health care service facilities available to growing areas.”

This year, Cassis has been on the forefront of making sure those transfers go through. With a new administration appointing new members to the state Certificate of Need Commission, there was potential for the Commission to try to override the legislation.

Cassis, who sits on the Senate Government Operations Committee that reviewed appointees to the Certificate of Need Commission, asked Attorney General Mike Cox for an informal opinion on whether or not the Commission has the authority to overturn the legislation allowing for the transfer. In response, the

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attorney general's office advised in a letter dated May 21 that the Certificate of Need Commission does not have authority to reverse that legislation.

In the last several years, health systems have lost millions of dollars due to the number of uninsured patients in their Detroit hospitals. This has caused systems to pull their hospitals out of the city all together, leaving fewer health care facilities for citizens of Detroit. Meanwhile, systems that have medical facilities in growing communities such as Novi and West Bloomfield are unable to meet the growing demand of patients visiting their facilities.

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